

## ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

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The Graduate School

Morehead State University

October 26, 2015

A NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AT A SOUTHERN  
POSTSECONDARY CAMPUS

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Abstract of capstone

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the  
College of Education  
At Morehead State University

By

Sheri Burnett

Nashville, Tennessee

Committee Chair: Lenora Jean Justice, Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

October 26, 2015

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## ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

A NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AT A SOUTHERN  
POSTSECONDARY CAMPUS

Social media, which are digital tools that allow immediate interaction such as Facebook and LinkedIn, are popular tools in today's society. This capstone research provides some clarification on the use of social media on one southern postsecondary campus. The study included a mixed methodology of qualitative and quantitative methods to determine to what extent, and for what purpose, social media are used at this particular campus. A survey was used to determine how social media are used as a tool in the classroom. Follow-up face-to-face and audio interviews were conducted with educators at the postsecondary campus to clarify their reasons for using and not using social media. By examining the reasons educators do and do not use social media in the classroom, strategies were developed to improve school policy practices and instructional support at this southern postsecondary campus. After analyzing the data, themes were presented by developing a white paper to suggest professional development strategies and resources to inform educators and administrators of the southern campus about using social media in the classroom.

**KEYWORDS:** social media, postsecondary education, needs analysis, professional development, and instructional support

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Candidate Signature

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Date

A NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AT A SOUTHERN  
POSTSECONDARY CAMPUS

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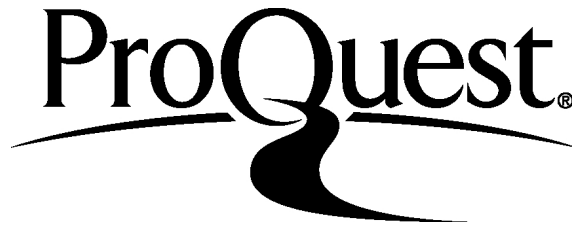
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### DEDICATION

Thank you for being there when I needed you, even at a moment's notice.

Thank you for your encouragement and kindness, for lifting me up and rejoicing with me, and for all the little ways you showed you care. For these acts, I dedicate my research and studies to my family and to the memory of my grandmother, whose kindness and pleasant smiles cheered me to the finish line.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“This journey is finally over”*

I would never have been able to finish my capstone without the guidance of God, my committee members, help from friends, and support from my family. You supported me throughout the process, provided encouragement for me to finish, and gave me a push when needed. For this, I appreciate having you as a part of my life.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The concept of social media is prevalent in society, but few people know exactly what the term means. As a relatively new buzz phrase in business and society, social media can have different meanings for different groups of people. One common understanding of social media is a platform used for social networking that provides individuals with newer, more innovative ways to communicate and connect socially. People have started looking for ways to capitalize on social media as emerging modes of communication and enhanced ways to connect with others to further their strategic goals. This is especially true in educational institutions, where recent research has indicated educators are using the most popular social media websites as business tools to network with others. For example, aside from using Facebook, the world's most popular social media website, for simple social networking, it is also being used for advertising and recruiting at several universities (Johnson & Maddox, 2012). In addition, the current generation of students entering universities and colleges use Web 2.0 applications such wikis, blogs, Rich Site Summary (RSS), podcasting, and social networking in their daily lives (Lenhart & Madden, 2005, 2007). Social media is penetrating many aspects of human life, and its benefits in educational settings are still not fully known. As new technologies evolve in the classroom, so does the ability of professional educators to push the evolution of educational technologies.

The purpose of this capstone project was to examine and analyze the use of social media within a particular postsecondary campus in Tennessee. This research

provides a richer understanding of how social media is implemented in instruction, as well as how social media may be more effectively applied as an educational tool. The results of this capstone are used in a white paper on the development and education of college instructors and administrative personnel in the effective adoption of social media. To understand the uses of social media in the classroom, the researcher explored to what extent and for what purposes social media can be used for the higher education institution studied.

### **Background**

The topic of research developed when a social media policy was announced at the Tennessee campus studied. The policy outlined the expectations for employees and explained and identified social media as a powerful communication tool that can have a significant impact on the school's reputation. The focus of the policy was ensuring employees' participation was personal or on behalf of the campus. To clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations, the policy included guidelines for employees who participate in social media platforms such as Internet messages board, personal web logs (blogs), online journals, wikis, social networks, social media and virtual worlds, or any other form of online communication. The policy was established to help employees appreciate social media and represent the campus professionally. The researcher and two colleagues were discussing the social media policy at the campus in Tennessee and one of the colleagues was not certain which social media methods were used at the campus or the meaning of the term *social media*.

More faculty, instructors, instructional designers, and staff are beginning to explore how social media technologies can successfully enhance student learning and encourage digital literacy among college students (Bennett, Bishop, Dalgarno, Waycott, & Kennedy, 2012). Despite the popularity of social media, a low percentage of students and instructors use social media for educational purposes (Chen & Bryer, 2012). College students and instructors are increasingly using online social networks for different reasons (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2009). The focus of this research was exploring social media usage among higher education faculty.

According to the Tennessee campus studied, social media refers to technologies used for communication development and knowledge sharing. Social media refers to online platforms that people use to share opinions and experiences, including photos, videos, music, insights, and perceptions (Lai & Turban, 2008). The use of social media in the general field of education has been approached with some caution. The use of technology in education is an increasingly popular trend among teaching professionals through platforms such as e-learning. Many educators have not yet harnessed the potential opportunities of using social media in the classroom (Lewis, Pea, & Rosen, 2010).

Social media has become a part of daily life and is a relatively new technology compared to traditional media. The traditional educational system on the campus in Tennessee has used social media as a means of support for educational learning. This research included a discussion on the major changes that have resulted from using technology to support students in the academic community. Most students in higher



education belong to the digital generation and frequently use online technology to interact with instructors and other learners, as well as to access online materials (Aghaee, 2010).

### **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this capstone was to perform a needs analysis for the campus in Tennessee to harness the knowledge-sharing potential of social media. A needs analysis involves identifying and evaluating needs in a community or other defined population of people (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). Identifying needs is a process of describing problems or a target population and possible solutions to these problems. A need is a gap between “‘what is’ and ‘what should be’” (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, p. 12). This study may provide knowledge and educational awareness to people who are not using social media and those who do not know what it is. The strategies developed from this study were designed to implement best practices for improving technology in the educational environment at one postsecondary campus in Tennessee.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Based on the rapid increase in the use of social media, some leaders in higher education institutions have adopted policies for using social media to connect with students (Martínez-Alemán & Wartman, 2008). The purpose of this study was to examine the use of social media among faculty and administrators in an institution of higher education. The study indicates the extent to which social media was used at the postsecondary campus. By examining the extent to which administrators and

faculty use social media, the researcher suggests uses for social media on the campus that are more effective.

### **Research Question**

This study was structured around the following research question:

To what extent, and for what purpose, is social media used by faculty and administrators at a southern postsecondary campus?

### **Significance of the Study**

An education supported by social media can complement traditional learning. By using social media, learners are able to promote an immediate connection through which they can share knowledge, send files to other learners, and build effective communication. Using social media can support student collaboration and learning guided by teaching strategies and other influential factors. The ways educators and learners should use social media and the important issues that should be considered for using new technologies cannot be resolved without clarifying how educators and learners use social media.

This research is significant because it involved purposefully facilitating the professional growth of college instructors through informal learning, including social media and other technologies, as instructional strategies that continue beyond formal education. This research fills gaps in the literature and adds knowledge regarding how to use social media effectively in colleges and universities. This study also identifies aspects of how social media is being used at the campus studied.

**Definition of Terms**

*Policies:* Policies are standards set by institutional leaders that users are expected to follow. Policies often require approval according to a set process, can have a legal status, and can result in serious consequences if not followed (Lenartz, 2012).

*Social media:* Social media is a classification for a wide variety of popular technologies that are open, facilitate interactivity, and encourage connectivity (Joosten, Pasquini, & Harness, 2013).

*Social networking:* Social networking refers to web-based services through which individuals can create a profile and share a connection with others (Boyd & Ellison, 2008).

*Web 2.0 applications:* Web 2.0 applications are social networking, blogs, wikis, and any other dynamic, Internet-based applications that allow for ongoing, collaborative, and investigative digital experiences (Anderson, 2007).

**Limitations of the Study**

One limitation of this study was that only a small sample of college instructors and administrators were surveyed and interviewed; thus, the results are not generalizable beyond the institution studied. The unique characteristics and culture of this institution may result in the levels of use and established guidelines being different from other nonprofit universities. The researcher had no immediate expectations or knowledge of how the college instructors and administrators perceived the impact of social media in higher education. An additional limitation

was that the researcher works at the campus where the research took place, which could have influenced participants' descriptions of their use of social media. The needs analysis identified sufficient data to move forward with developing a white paper that contains recommendations to the provost of the postsecondary campus.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This literature review includes an examination of the understanding of social media and its concepts and application. The focus of this capstone was to perform a needs analysis to understand if faculty know how to use this resource and how it could be useful in the classroom. A needs analysis requires planning, collecting and analyzing data, and preparing a final report outlining the key findings. A white paper was developed to summarize evidence related to effective instructional practices and to determine how educating college instructors about using social media can add to effective instruction. The white paper will be presented to the provost of the university with the intent to educate faculty members and administrative staff about ways to implement social media as a valuable resource. This study involved exploring an innovative idea in communications technology to determine if using social media is a possible solution for promoting higher education and to determine to what extent, and for what purposes, faculty and administration use social media at one postsecondary campus.

### **Defining Social Media**

Social media is a classification for a wide variety of popular technologies that are open, facilitate interactivity, and encourage connectivity (Joosten et al., 2013). Social media applications are gaining in popularity as they become a method in which students, staff, and faculty communicate and share information. As social media technologies become more enmeshed in people's lives, there is an expectation that students will develop digital literacy, including skills related to continuous discovery,

along with the ability to connect to real-world issues and take responsibility for their own learning (Danciu & Grosseck, 2011). The same can be said of higher education staff and faculty. As a result, institutional leaders are increasingly responsible for addressing the role of digital literacy within the educational environment.

Institutional leaders are likely to provide adequate support to their organizational members through resources and guidance that assist in identifying, implementing, and communicating about the relationship between digital literacy and social media (Joosten et al., 2013).

Colleges and universities have universally harnessed the communicative power of social media for institutional operations and services to extend their reach (Barnes & Lescault, 2011), and social media is used to embrace its potential power as a component of maintaining connections with students. This research involved exploring the effective use of social media in higher education, particularly at one campus in Tennessee.

Several definitions exist for the term social media. Manovich (2009) described the shift “from media to social media” (p. 320) as the result of spurring technologies and practices that allow ordinary Internet users, rather than media professionals, to engage actively in organizing, discussing, remixing, and creating content. The term social media refers to electronic communication such as websites for social networking and blogging through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content such as videos.

Social media can take many different forms, including blogs, forums, message boards, wikis, podcasts, social bookmarking, picture sharing, and instant messaging. Popular social media sites include YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, and Twitter (Pikalek, 2010). Through social media, students, faculty, scholars, and the public can communicate and collaborate in ways that transcend institutional boundaries. In a study of social media sites popular among scholars, the most frequently used sites for scholarly work were electronic mailing lists, nonacademic social networks, blogs, online document management, media repositories, and wikis (Coleman, 2013).

The terms *social media* and *social networking* have become popular, especially in a higher education setting. Many higher education instructors and educators are expected to be up to date with social media applications and users (Selwyn, 2012). Technology and social media increase connectivity between educators and college students. University students, many of whom are members of the millennial generation, are accustomed to using technology in almost every facet of their daily life (Underwood, Austin, & Giroir, 2010).

Common terms used to describe social media include information sharing, electronic communication, and social interaction (Ratliff, 2011). Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social media as web-based services through which individuals construct a public or semipublic profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users who share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system.

With increasing use among students, faculty, and alumni, social media tools are changing the way educators and administrators in educational institutions conduct classes, communicate, and recruit new students. Social media technology has been growing significantly to support users gaining access to valuable knowledge through different resources. Caraher and Braselman (2010) noted, “‘Collaboration means education’ and social media is considered as a tool in education, used by more than half of the learners to enable collaboration, real-time dialogue, and knowledge or data sharing” (p. 8).

### **Who Uses Social Media**

Social media provides a learning atmosphere for both faculty and students as they become engaged in higher education. Engagement includes commitment, action, connectedness, and personal interaction and does not require a geographic neighborhood of peers; with the support of social media, staff and educators in higher education can satisfy the expectation of students (Tinto, 2006, 2007). Social media increases engagement and supports students from a distance. College students, who include baby boomers, Generation Xers, and millennials, are exposed to all types of technologies in many aspects of their lives (Browning, Gerlich, & Westermann, 2011). Social media provides a dynamic blend of technology and social integration as well as accessibility to individuals of all educational statuses and socioeconomic backgrounds (Ratliff, 2011). Professors at higher education institutions are becoming increasingly likely to use social media platforms as classroom tools (Riley, 2013).



Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013) found that 41% of the faculty they surveyed used social media as a teaching tool in 2013, compared to around 34% in 2012.

According to research from the Nielsen Company (2009), two thirds of Internet users worldwide use social networks and social networking, which have surpassed e-mail as the fourth most popular online activity. Social networking sites are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordance and research. A 2011 study on trends in social media use among U.S. colleges and universities found that 100% of the study participants, who were all educators, were using some form of social media to engage current and former students (Barnes & Lescault, 2011). Three years earlier, an estimated 61% of the sampled colleges and universities were using social media tools (Barnes & Lescault, 2011). Tinto (1993) noted students are more likely to have higher persistence rates if they connect to the social and academic life of the institution they attend. Educators and administrators in institutions of higher education are using social media tools at an unprecedented rate, and they are beginning to acknowledge the value of the collaborative nature of social media.

Despite the growth of social media for personal use, educators have been slow to use social media technologies for academic practice. The authors of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (2010) surveyed 4,600 faculty members from 50 U.S. colleges and universities and discovered that 80% of the faculty had never used social media technologies such as blogs, wikis, Google Docs, videoconferencing, video games, or virtual worlds (Guy, 2012).

Rutherford (2010) examined the use of social media in an online learning environment to assess the perceived impact of social media use on student engagement. Rutherford concluded that understanding the use of social media resources might assist in motivating students with low levels of engagement, as it is critical to students' understanding of the subject matter.

### **Trends of Social Media**

Cardona-Divale (2012) completed a qualitative descriptive study to determine the extent to which Facebook and Twitter had been implemented and used in the online learning environment. Cardona-Divale discussed the ways social networking sites are transforming education and are providing new learning opportunities when integrated with Web 2.0 tools. Findings revealed that the use of Facebook and Twitter for academic purposes was minimal, and faculty agreed that having these tools as an option could be more beneficial than not using current technological tools and services at all.

Dey (2013) conducted a study on the effectiveness of social media in advancing transformational change. Successful implementation of new practices can effect transformational change in an organization that is heavily dependent on the support of key stakeholders. The results showed a clear preference for using social media as an effective form of relationship development and effective communication, but a challenge remains regarding how organizational leaders can best use social media to create and sustain the relationship required to accomplish transformational change.

**Use of Social Media in Universities and Colleges**

Nicholson (2012) conducted a qualitative thematic analysis of young adults' use of social media during the 2008 presidential campaign. The historical presidential election of Barack Obama and his use of social media offered communication scholars the opportunity to continue questioning and exploring the role of traditional media in political campaigns while simultaneously attempting to understand the influence of social networks as a newer Internet medium. The study included a qualitative thematic analysis to examine interviews of 20 participants from one predominantly White college and one historically Black college. The thematic analysis of interviews revealed that, for the most part, both groups of students shared similar reasons and reasoning for using social media during the campaign. In the exploratory study, Nicholson established the foundation to expand research in the area of social media use by young adults during political campaigns. Participants considered their online support of Obama as being politically active.

Higher education instructors are having a hard time accepting that social media dominates the world, at least outside of the classroom (Kadel, 2013). The Babson Survey Research Group's annual study of social media for professional and personal use among higher education faculty began in 2009 with a few basic questions: are faculty aware of social media, do they use it in any aspect of their lives, and do they believe it has value in their teaching (Moran, Seaman, & Tinti-Kane, 2011)? A clear pattern emerged from this series of reports showing that faculty are much more willing to embrace social media in their personal lives than they are to use

it for professional or teaching purposes. Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013) discovered that 41% of faculty surveyed used social media as a teaching tool in 2013, compared to around 34% in 2012. More than half of higher education faculty replied that they used social media platforms for professional purposes in 2013. The number of faculty who used social media in the classroom still did not represent a majority, but teaching use continued a steady annual growth. Faculty see considerable potential in the application of social media and technology in their teaching, but not without a number of serious barriers. Social technologies can provide new opportunities to engage learners, and many educators are discovering impactful strategies for using them in face-to-face, blended, and online classes (Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013).

Social media use for formal or informal learning is not without risk, however. Even with software security safeguards, communication through social media is permanently archived and, in many cases, widely distributed. Although testimonials abound of students collaborating on individual assignments and projects, universities have begun charging students for code violations when they collaborate on social media sites (CBC News, 2008; Dyer, 2010). Through telephone interviews, Chen and Bryer (2012) documented the perceptions and experiences of 57 faculty members from 28 universities across the United States regarding social media. The results indicated 100% used social media for personal, academic, research, or professional purposes, with the majority using Facebook for personal communication and LinkedIn for professional connections. Further probing regarding social media for academic practice revealed that activities were designed as informal, open, and self-

regulated reinforcements to classroom teaching. Similar to student use, faculty members are using social media technologies for personal communications, information sharing, and professional connections (Chen & Bryer, 2012; Tiryakiogul & Erzurman, 2010).

Lu, Newman, and Miller (2014) explored the role of connecting secondary and postsecondary students using social media skills. These researchers explored how high school and college students view the value of social media as a learning tool, and findings showed significantly different perceptions about how social media aids learning. The differences provided a foundation for discussion among educational leaders. The findings of the study revealed a trend of secondary students appreciating and believing that social media is important for helping them learn, but that by early in the college experience, the belief or perception is that social media is less helpful to them. Recommendations for educational leaders indicated that leaders needed to learn more about how social media can be beneficial in the classroom and develop a personal understanding of what social media does, can do, and is doing for the students.

### **Diffusion of Innovation and Social Media**

Internet-based applications have continued to gain popularity and have millions of users. Most people are familiar with the Internet and its applications. Social media is an innovation and a new technology to the postsecondary institution in Tennessee. Innovation is an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption (Rogers, 2003). According to human behavior, it

does not matter whether an idea is objectively new, as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery (Rogers, 2003). Rogers's Diffusion of Innovation theory is the most appropriate theory for investigating the adoption of technology in higher education and educational environments (Medlin, 2001; Parisot, 1995). Social media is one of the most prominent innovations and incorporates millions of users around the world. Rogers (2003) suggested that individuals follow a five-step process when deciding to adopt an innovation. The first step is knowledge, which occurs when a person first learns about an innovation. The second step is persuasion and occurs when the person adopting the innovation forms a favorable attitude about it. The third step is decision and occurs when the person chooses to adopt the innovation. The fourth step is implementation and occurs when the person actively begins using the innovation. The last step is confirmation and occurs when the person adopting gains positive reinforcement from the adoption process.

If social media use in the Tennessee campus is an example, the first step (i.e., knowledge) could be a teacher who learns about social media and discovers from a colleague that it is useful for a specific class. As that colleague demonstrates how social media can be used, the teacher begins to learn and understand (i.e., persuasion) and sees a potential lesson. The teacher then makes the choice (i.e., decision) to use social media in the curriculum. The fourth step is when the teacher is planning to use and then using social media in class with the students (i.e., implementation). Finally, when the students successfully learn the intended lesson through the teaching process, the teacher is rewarded for implementing social media in the class (i.e., confirmation).

After an individual adopts the innovation, there is no guarantee that the adoption will spread to others by diffusion throughout society (Justice & Ritzhaupt, 2015).

To integrate technology into higher education successfully, it is important to gather perceptions of technology from the faculty who will use these resources. Vanguri, Gomes, and Gray (2007) conducted a study to investigate faculty technology use at institutions of higher education in Florida by examining various types of instructional technology beliefs and practices. One of the major areas to address with technology integration in higher education was faculty development. Vanguri et al (2007) chose a qualitative, ethnographic approach to the study, which included a survey of faculty at the institutions to investigate their perception of faculty development programs at their institutions. The study also investigated the various ways that the institutional leaders made their support systems and programs known through official publications and websites. One important factor discovered in the resistance of technology was the dynamics of the relationship between faculty and support staff in the university environment. Most faculty members at the institutions of higher education had years of teaching experience and were experts in their content area, but few faculty members received formal teaching training.

### **Impact of Social Media Use**

Alexander (2006) introduced a variety of social media tools and explained their possible use in higher education classes. Alexander also challenged the community to look at how higher education faculty put forward “a complex, contradictory mix of openness and restriction, public engagement and cloistering” (p.

42). Duffy and Burns (2006) detailed the possibilities for using social software tools such as blogs, wikis, and RSS feeds in educational settings, stating that the new social and mobile reality of delivering education content to students should match what they will encounter after graduation. In addition, they noted that educational institutions have an obligation to their student to best prepare them for the future by fostering their collaborative communication competencies.

Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) conducted an experimental study to determine how using Twitter could affect students' engagement and grades. Twitter was used to extend discussions beyond the classroom by having students participate in panel discussions, submit reactions to readings, and submit their service work observations. Along with their posts, they were to react to other students' tweets. These researchers used two student groups: a control group that did not use Twitter and an experimental group that received training and had assignments that required them to use the tool. Their data demonstrated that students using Twitter had a greater increase in engagement than the control group, as well as higher semester grade point averages. The researchers strongly felt these results supported the educational usefulness of the tool and social media as a means to reach higher outcomes (Junco et al., 2011).

Acar (2013) investigated how students feel about using social media for classes and their general attitudes toward online learning. A survey study of Japanese college students from five different classes showed that attitudes toward blended learning might relate to attitudes toward social media use for academic purposes. The



findings showed that attitudes toward other types of online learning methods or having experience using a Facebook class page did not relate to attitudes toward social media for academic purposes. Acar (2013) tried to identify variables of attitudes toward social media for academic purposes and discovered a high correlation with attitudes toward social media use. The Japanese students had favorable attitudes toward social media for academic purposes. Acar (2013) noted that more than 80% of Japanese college students felt uncomfortable using their real names and real pictures in social media.

### **Conceptual Framework: Needs Analysis**

The basis of this capstone project was a needs analysis, which is the process of conducting a series of activities to identify problems or other issues in the workplace and to determine whether training is an appropriate response (McArdle, 1998). Needs analysis is a tool for decision making in human services and education (McKillip, 1998). A needs analysis is usually the first in a series of steps implemented to encourage effective change because a needs analysis specifically defines the gap between current and desired organizational and individual performances (McArdle, 1998). The process of conducting a needs analysis is systemic based on specific information-gathering techniques. When conducted properly, a needs analysis is a wise investment for the overall organization, which could save time, money, and effort by working to correct a problem. A well-performed needs analysis provides information that could lead to solutions that focus on the areas of greatest need. McArdle (1998) noted that when conducting a needs

analysis, four steps help determine where the problem exists, determine whether training would be appropriate, fix the problems, and outline suggested training. The steps in the process are surveillance, also known as *research*; investigation, also known as *data collection*; analysis, which leads to the *recommendation*; and the report, which in this case, consists of a *white paper*.

College instructors and administrators should understand what social media means and how effective social media can be to educational institutions. The outcome of a needs analysis is only as good as the data collected, which may help to avoid reinventing the wheel in future endeavors. It is also used to establish goals for the university and future expectations from educators. A survey and a face-to-face interview approach served as the method used to identify needs for this study.

This study included a qualitative portion in the methodology that involved observation, structured interviews, and data analysis that were applied to solve problems within the southern university under study. According to Glesne (2006), researchers focus on understanding and interpreting the information requested and requiring multiple perspectives from participants. This choice of research was the most appropriate form of research to accomplish this research study. The needs analysis involved finding the problem or determining whether the problem was solved as a result of implementing social media in higher education and the complement of strategies in the process of finding appropriate solutions for the problem (Kaufman & English, 1976).

This study involved interviewing college instructors and administrators and writing a white paper based on the analysis. The needs analysis on instructional information related to the technologies used to support instructional delivery on a southern campus included a survey of college instructors and academic administrators. The survey was a motivation for growth and change for the learning curve at the campus.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The purpose of this capstone project was to conduct a needs analysis to determine the uses of social media on a particular campus in Tennessee. The university's policy "on social media", received in an e-mail from the southern university administration, stated,

Employees associated with the university, when engaged in social media activity, can be held liable for anything they post to social media sites that affects the university and should follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in a face-to-face interaction.

A needs analysis study that included observation, structured interviews, and a quantitative and qualitative data analyses was suitable for identifying for what use and to what extent social media is used at the campus in Tennessee. Additionally, according to Glesne (2006), the focus of research was on understanding and interpreting the information requested and requiring multiple perspectives from participants. The needs analysis involved finding a problem or determining whether the problem was solved as a result of implementing social media in higher education and the complement of strategies in the process of finding appropriate solutions for the problem (Kaufman & English, 1976).

#### **Participants**

The participants for this study were instructors and administrators at a postsecondary campus. These individuals were chosen based on their willingness to participate in the survey. The university has approximately 45 faculty members, 10

administrators, and 400 students. An electronic survey developed for the research study was sent to all members of the target population with an introductory message inviting them to complete the survey. The survey was used to select 10 instructors and administrators to participate in the study. For the interviews, the study included an even mix of respondents who did and did not use social media in the classroom. Participants in this study were purposefully selected based on their involvement and experience with the study topic. The snowball sampling technique was used with the purposefully selected participants, who suggested names of other faculty who might meet the inclusion criteria (Veletsianos, 2012). The number of participants was adequate for the qualitative study and allowed a deeper analysis. Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and using the software application Free Conferencing, depending on the location and schedule of the interviewee. After sending out the first survey e-mail, a reminder notice was e-mailed every 7 days to respondents who did not return the survey within 2 weeks.

### **Instruments**

The study included two different collection tools: an electronic survey and an interview protocol with open-ended questions. The survey consisted of 14 questions, two of which were open-ended (see Appendix A). The survey consisted of demographic questions and questions that determined if the interviewees were comfortable with social media in the workplace or personally. The interview was semistructured and included 12 open-ended questions (see Appendix B).

**Survey.** According to Leedy and Ormrod (2009), researchers use a survey to acquire information by asking questions and tabulating the responses, which is appropriate for descriptive data analysis. The survey used in this study was adopted from a published dissertation on a related topic. The questions were modified so the researcher was able to identify and learn more about the social media preferences participants were using. The detailed survey was developed and available online through Google Forms for at least 4 weeks from the original e-mail date. An e-mail sent to the participants included a link to the survey. The survey helped to determine the effects of a knowledge base on social media use among college instructors and faculty members. The survey included questions about demographics, respondent attitudes, the ways the participants thought and felt, and the ways they used or did not use social media. The researcher designed the survey to gather personal data about the interviewees. Appendix A also includes two open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to share their feelings about social media.

**Interview protocol.** The researcher received permission in the Fall 2013 from Chen and Bryer (2012) to use their interview protocol with a few modifications. The modifications consisted of asking if the participant knew what the term social media meant and adding additional probing questions. Appendix B includes the 15 open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to give their perception of social media use personally and in the classroom. An open-ended question, unlike a leading question, establishes a topic to explore while allowing participants to take any direction they want; it does not presume an answer (Seidman, 2013).

**Procedures**

The following steps were followed sequentially, including conducting a needs analysis by sending out an electronic survey composed of 14 questions distributed using Google Forms to learn more about participants' social media preferences and by conducting interviews. The survey was available online for at least 4 weeks from the original e-mail date. A reminder notice was e-mailed to responders every 7 days. After the survey time expired, 12 respondents were chosen for interviews. All respondents signed a consent form that explained the purpose of the study prior to the interview. Each of the 12 respondents was contacted via e-mail and an interview date and time were scheduled. Participants met the interviewer in a designated area or received details for the audio conference-call application FreeConferencing.com. The participants and researcher met at the designated time and location. Upon beginning the interview, the interviewer discussed the interview protocol (see Appendix B) regarding the purpose of the interview and the fact that the interview would be recorded. Each participant was interviewed once for no longer than 45 minutes. The interviewer used the interview protocol to guide the interviewee through the questions and took field notes regarding the participant's responses to the questions using an audio tape recorder or free conference calling software. Relevant labels such as words, phrases, sentences, or sections were recorded during the interview, and the researcher transcribed the interviews. To strengthen the reliability and validity of the study, a peer doctoral student reviewed the field notes with all the common themes, the analysis without looking at the researcher's analysis to report their findings. The

researcher also received assistance from a doctoral colleague who reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcriptions. All collected data were secure, locked, and coded to prevent the survey from being compromised.

### **Data Analysis**

Interviews and a survey were the major sources of data for this study. The social media survey (see Appendix A) provided extensive, descriptive data and further elaborated on information about the interviewee. The analysis of the survey involved summarizing the data according to the research question (for example, best practices and overall impact on students). A factor analysis was used to identify factors since it is commonly used to reduce variables into a smaller set to facilitate easier interpretations. The purpose of a factor analysis is to summarize data so that relationships and patterns can be easily interpreted and understood. It is often used to regroup variables into a limited set of clusters based on shared variance. The basis of factor analysis is the notion that measurable and observable variables can be reduced to fewer latent variables that share a common variance and are unobservable, which is known as reducing dimensionality (Bartholomew, Knotts, & Moustaki, 2011).

The researcher analyzed interviews by writing memos or notes that were included as a narrative in the final report, and organizing the structure of the final report. After all interviews were finished, the researcher reviewed the notes to develop themes. To enhance the rigor of the study, several techniques were used during the data-gathering process. The qualitative software program NVivo was helpful for organizing, sorting, and searching for information in text. Using



qualitative software was an efficient way to sort and locate qualitative data. Although the researcher went through each line of text, as in hand coding by going through the transcripts, and assigned codes, this process may be faster and more efficient than hand coding. The researcher organized and prepared the data for analysis, which involved transcribing interviews, typing field notes, and cataloging visual material. The data were then sorted and arranged into different categories depending on the sources of information. All data was read and reviewed to obtain a general sense of information and to reflect the meaning. A coding process was used to generate a description of the setting or people as well as the category or themes. The interpretation and findings of the results were written in a report based on the data used from the content of the original data sources. Ideas and themes developed from these findings and the process by which these outcomes were researched (Bazeley, 2007).

The data analysis process followed each observation and interview, as the researcher reviewed the sources of information to identify recurring themes and patterns. Data and tentative interpretations were developed. Areas of major concern included instructional practices with a focus on materials and procedures currently used in the classroom and the interviewees' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses regarding social media.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are potential weaknesses in a study. One limitation in this capstone was that the study included only college instructors and administrators from

one university in Tennessee. Therefore, results were not generalizable beyond that particular institution. The unique characteristics and culture of this institution may have resulted in the levels of use and established guidelines being different from other nonprofit universities.

Measurement biases include using instruments and research methods that will affect the overall results or are not ideal for the type of research, using research tools that are not sensitive enough to detect small variables that could affect results, or using instruments that may influence results toward the researcher's outcome, which reflects expectation bias. The researcher had no expectation of how the college instructors and administrators perceived the impact of social media in higher education. In some cases, measurement biases can be entirely accidental, such as using balanced weighing scales in experiments; however, with this type of research, the researcher held to a different level to limit research biases. Participants ranged in age from their mid-30s to their 60s and had varying opinions of the use and understanding of social media, which led to having an unbalanced weighing scale. An additional limitation was that the researcher works at the southern university where the research was conducted. The researcher did not personally know the individuals participating in the research.

The written survey portion established the levels of use of social media. Respondents may have had an unclear definition of social media, which could have motivated them to participate in the survey. Individuals who participated in the survey may have been different from those who did not participate. A research bias

may have occurred because of the researcher's passion to understand how important implementing social media into the classroom could be. The trustworthiness of this qualitative study relied on the triangulation of data (Patton, 2002), the maintenance of data (Yin, 2009), and the interpretation of data. Creswell (2008) observed that the triangulation of data from multiple sources reduces potential bias, provides greater credibility, and enriches the reliability of research findings. Methodology triangulation consists of combining multiple methods to gather data, such as documents, interviews, observations, questionnaires, or surveys, when conducting primary research at different times and in different places. Survey forms before and after their use in the study were kept secure, locked, and coded (or otherwise unidentifiable) using numbers to prevent a compromise of the survey. The way that the data were interpreted may have had varying effects on the conclusions. This study involved all the above methods, and data were stored accordingly to protect the identity of the participants. All the conditions of a situation were considered and inferences made in strict accordance with the data obtained (Leedy & Ormrod, 2009).

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Overview of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of social media among faculty and administrators in a southern university in Tennessee. This study specifically involved answering the following research question: To what extent, and for what purpose, is social media being used by faculty and administrators at a postsecondary campus.

A mixed methodology allowed for an in-depth study that enabled the research to dictate the effort. The study involved the intentional collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and the combined strengths of each to answer the research question. To measure these variables and analyze the data yielded, the research study involved an electronic survey and an interview protocol. The adoption of social media in education was examined through the lens of Rogers's (2003) Diffusions of Innovation theory.

The population of the study was the faculty and administrative personnel of a southern university during the 2015 academic year. The study involved a mixed methodology (Creswell, 2008) in which survey data were collected from 23 faculty members and two administrative personnel. To collect the qualitative data, 12 of the 23 faculty members surveyed were interviewed separately. An invitation e-mail and a hyperlink to the electronic survey were sent to the target population in March 2015, and the survey remained open for 2 weeks.

Participants' ages ranged from the early 30s to over 60, and all held the position of either full-time or adjunct instructors or administrators. The survey was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, while the remainder of the data (interviews) were analyzed as qualitative data using the NVivo software program.

### **Demographic Findings**

Of the 23 individuals who responded to the survey, 16 (69%) were adjunct instructors, four (17.4%) were full-time faculty, and six (26.1%) were administrators (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Describe Yourself*

Position	<i>n</i>	%
Adjunct instructor	16	69.6
Full-time faculty	4	17.4
Administrator	6	26.1

Nine (39.1%) had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 10 (43.5%) had 6-19 years of teaching experience, and four (17.4%) had more than 20 years of teaching experience (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Years of Service*

Years	<i>n</i>	%
1-5 years	9	39.1
6-19 years	10	43.5
20+ years	4	17.4

Thirty-nine percent of individuals were between the ages of 31 and 45, 52.2% were in the 46-59 age group, and 8.5% were 60 and above (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Current Age*

Age	<i>n</i>	%
Less than 30	0	0.0
31-45	9	39.1
46-59	12	52.2
60 and above	2	8.7

Each question was reviewed based on the individuals who responded to that specific question. Participants were selected based on the survey instrument, which was sorted by demographic information (i.e., age, years of service, position) to develop a better understanding of the group of participants. A needs analysis (conceptual framework), a qualitative comparison through the lens of Diffusion of Innovation theory, and an exploratory factor analysis were conducted to explore the relationship between the use of social media among faculty and administrators. These procedures helped to reduce the data to a smaller set of variables that were easier to compare.

### **Survey Findings**

Results from the survey instrument were collected and analyzed using an exploratory factor analysis. To determine whether the survey data had sufficient multicollinearity to run a factor analysis, Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted. Bartlett's test of sphericity of the data had a  $\chi^2 = 187.864$  ( $p < .001$ ), which means that correlations in the data set were appropriate for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .447, which was not above the .5 recommended limits (Kaiser, 1974). The sample size was the main problem, but due

to the small size of the college, the researcher was unable to obtain the suggested 100 participants for the test; therefore, the researcher proceeded with an exploratory factor analysis, which helped to reduce the data to a smaller set of variables that was easier to complete. As the sample size was small, there may be interaction between variables.

### **Defining Factors**

An exploratory factor analysis was performed on the data obtained from the survey instrument. Five factors were extracted and accounted for 78.535% of the variability (see Appendix C). The first factor, professional development, accounted for 30.78% of the variance. It contained five items from a category of training. The participants responded to training professional usage (average of 1.45 out of a possible 5 points) with responses 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *disagree*, and 5 = *strongly disagree*; professional use (average of 2.52 out of a possible 3 points) with responses 1 = *never*, 2 = *infrequently*, and 3 = *frequently*; and barriers (average of 2.94 out of a possible 4 points) with responses 1 = *content relevant*, 2 = *ethical issues*, 3 = *technology*, and 4 = *other*. The highest rated factor for professional development was barriers (average of 2.94 out of a possible 4 points). The last in this factor was connection (average of 1.59 out of a possible 5 points) with responses 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *disagree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. The highest rated factor for professional development was barriers (average of 2.94 out of a possible 4 points).

The second factor, current use, accounted for 17.41% of the variance. The second factor indicated both professional and personal use of social media sites. For professional use, the participants (average of 2.52 out of possible 3 points) responded with 1 = *never*, 2 = *infrequently*, and 3 = *frequently*, and for personal use (average of 2.34 out of possible 3 points) participants responded with 1 = *never*, 2 = *infrequently*, and 3 = *frequently*.

The third factor, reason for use, accounted for 13.62% of the variance. It indicated how social media can be beneficial in the classroom, both on campus and online; social media use; and not personally using social media. The participants indicated how social media can be beneficial in the classroom (average of 1.18 out of possible 4 points) with responses of 1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*, 3 = *not really sure how to utilize this tool*, and 4 = *not familiar enough to address this question*. The participants indicated social media use (average of 2.34 out of a possible 3 points) with 1 = *never*, 2 = *infrequently*, and 3 = *frequently*. The participants also indicated reasons they did not use social media (average of 2.00 out of 5 points) with responses of 1 = *privacy*, 2 = *ethical*, 3 = *technical limitations*, 4 = *limited usefulness*, and 5 = *other*.

The fourth factor, about yourself, accounted for 9.42% of the variance and indicated the interviewees' age and years of service. The participants' responses for age (average of 2.69 out of possible 4 points) were 1 = *less than 30*, 2 = *31-45*, 3 = *46-59*, and 4 = *60 and above*. The participants' responses for service (average of 1.78 out of 3 points) were 1 = *1-5 years*, 2 = *6-19 years*, and 3 = *20+ years*.



The fifth factor, barriers, accounted for 7.29% of the variance that described how the educators had concerns and were not professionally using social media. The participants' responses for concerns (average 2.94 out of possible 5) were 1 = *private concerns*, 2 = *ethical*, 3 = *technical*, 4 = *limited usefulness*, and 5 = *other*). The participants responded to concerns with reasons for not professionally using social media (average of 2.75 out of possible 4 points) with 1 = *privacy*, 2 = *ethical issues*, 3 = *technology*, and 4 = *limited usefulness*, and 5 = *others* (see Appendix D). For each variable, the mean was recorded, calculated, and compared. The variables were examined using SPSS (see Figure 1).

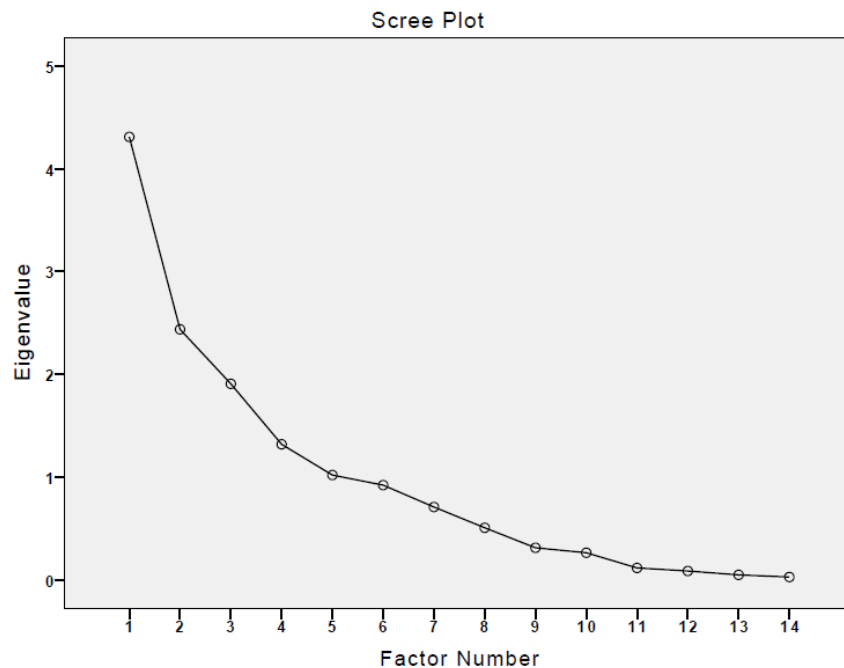
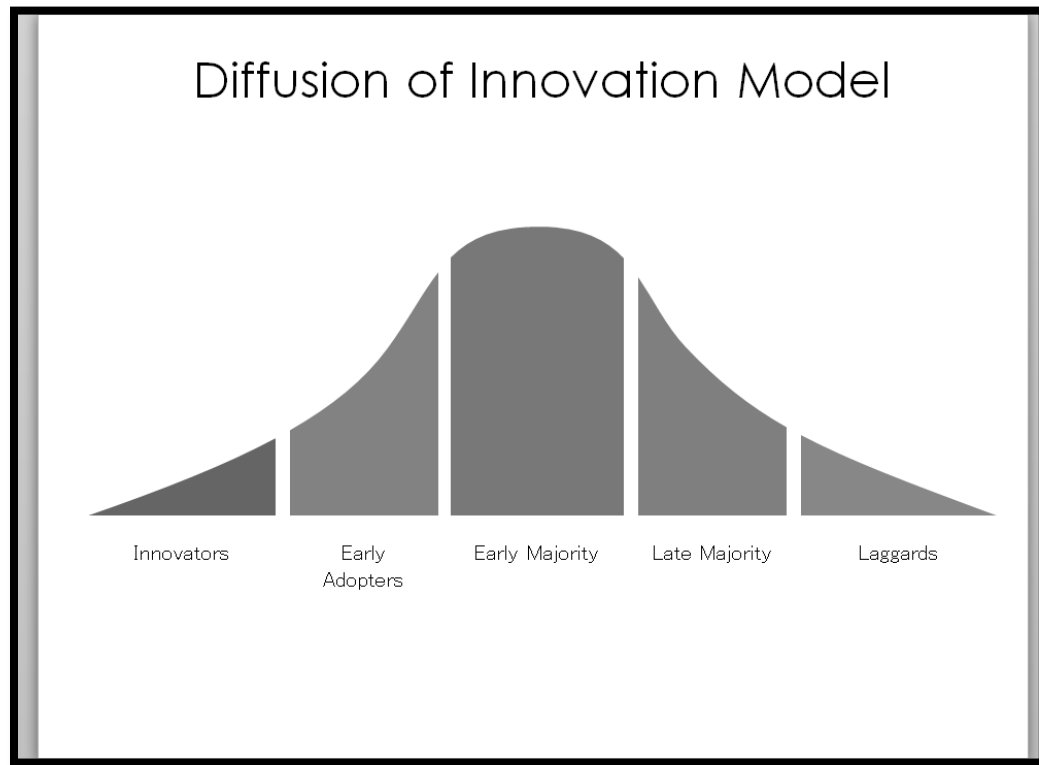


Figure 1. Scree plot.

### **Interview Findings**

In addition to conducting a survey, individuals were asked to participate in face-to-face interviews to gather specific feedback about how social media was being used, how it could be constructed, and what type of impact it might have on higher education (see Appendix B). Twelve individuals were selected for interviews based on the responses from the initial survey: five full-time faculty members, one administrator, and six adjunct instructors. The interviewees were personnel who supported the innovation of using social media in the classroom, which included a librarian, staff members, full-time instructors, and adjunct instructors. The interviews included additional perspectives on the innovation of social media and confirmed some issues discussed during the interview such as barriers and technology. The overall reception to the use of social media was positive. Although not everyone believed that social media has a place within the classroom, all recognized that there could be a positive impact, such as increased communication and access to information that could also enhance student engagement. Providing additional avenues to share information with students, school policy, confidentiality, issues with access, and management interference were some of the concerns expressed.

Results from the interviews were grouped according to the types of responses provided. For example, questions dealing with diffusion of innovation (i.e., relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, triability, and observability) were analyzed together. Interviewees were in various stages, including innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2.* Diffusion of Innovation model.

The results from the interviews showed that five participants were eager to use social media in their classroom. These participants expressed their current best practices of how they were currently using YouTube, blogs and wikis and were grouped in two or more categories. Nine early adopters were grouped in this category, were considered leaders, and enjoyed taking the leadership role to embrace social media, along with new ideas and innovation. Eight early majority adopters were late to adopt to make changes and were not the first ones to try social media nor the last to lay traditional teaching practices aside. Four late majority adopters were

the individuals who adopted social media because of scarce resources and uncertainty about social media; this group felt it was safe to adopt social media and added the practice to their current teaching practices. Three interviewees were considered laggards, were very skeptical of change, and were the hardest group to persuade (see Figure 3).

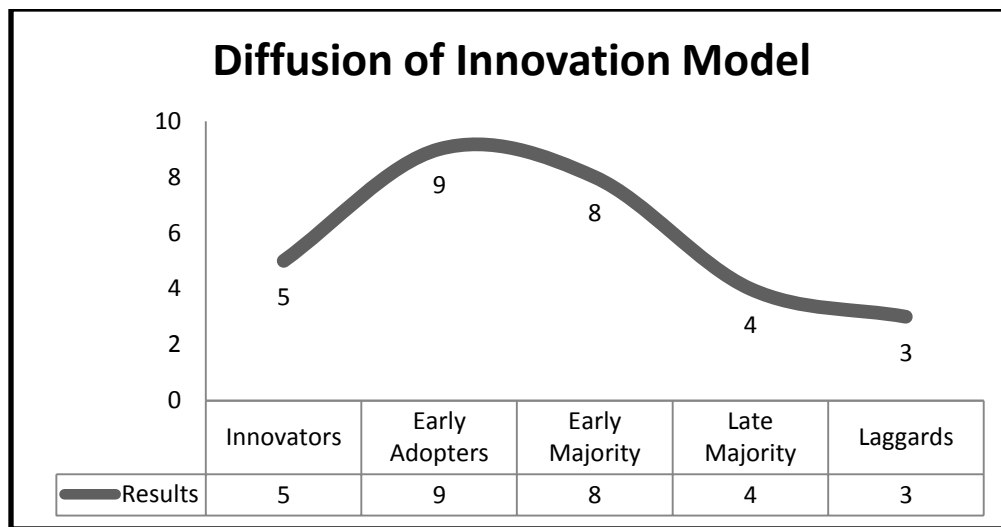


Figure 3. Diffusion of Innovation model interview findings.

**Innovators.** Four faculty members and one administrator expressed eagerness in using social media in the classroom. Some of the responses were as follows:

- “Simple lecturing is not going to get it in today’s classroom due to moving to another generation and today’s students need more stimulation.”
- “Everyone is using some form of social media now. You’d be surprised. It’s not just for networking, but for educational purposes. In order to keep up with the trend of marketing, educators will have to embrace social media.”

The interviewees who expressed true innovation of the new idea ranged in age from 31 to 45 years old and used social media on a professional and personal level.

**Early adopters.** Nine early adopters were grouped in this category; were considered leaders because they held leadership roles at the campus including lead instructors, librarian, and so forth; and enjoyed taking the leadership role to embrace new ideas and innovation. Two faculty members expressed their opinion of using social media for educational purposes and shared that they were already using the technology as an innovative tool. Some of the responses were as follows:

- “Everyone may not appreciate the harness that is often found in some social media sites such as YouTube. Sometimes students begin to see themselves and personal biases develop.”
- “Using social media was a way of bridging the technology gap and explores people, especially those who there are auditory learners.”
- “Social media is a way to help those students who would not ask for assistance in the classroom, but would go to a YouTube video and watch a demonstration instead.”

The interviewees who expressed a leadership role ranged in age from 31 to 45 years old and actively used social media in the classroom as a way to stimulate students.

**Early majority.** The eight individuals in the early majority were interviewees who are rarely leaders but do adapt to new ideas. These individuals need to see

evidence that the innovation works before they are willing to adopt it. The interviewees showed concerns with students' involvement:

- “Because of lack of one-on-one teacher involvement and not having direct involvement in the classroom, I’m not sure that social media can be useful.”
- A statistics instructor expressed concerns stating, “Students that are not familiar with statistical notation or formulas and using social media would have a hard time being able to communicate effectively.”
- “Social media could have a positive effect if implemented properly with technology support. The support could be challenging and some instructors should feel comfortable about using social media and the college should provide support.”
- “Not every professor is computer savvy. Technology is moving faster than you can image and it’s going to be a new form of learning and teaching in the future.”
- “We cannot stay in the classroom and just lecture using table, pencil, and paper. We have to learn to be creative and challenge students, which will also be a challenge for the professors.”

These interviewees expressed concerns about using technology and suggested training would be beneficial in using social media properly. The age range for this category was from 46 to 56 years old with over 20 years of teaching experience.

**Late majority.** Five late majority participants were skeptical of change and would only be willing to adopt the innovation of using social media after it was tried by the majority and based on the current school policy. Two participants stated the following:

- “This generation is so tuned into social media such as Twitter and Facebook, but implementing a social media aspect into the class could be a distractor for the students’ learning.”
- “Students miss out on interacting with the real world by being connected with social media. They do not learn the basic interactive people skill if everything that is done is computer-based.”

These interviewees expressed skepticism about using social media, ranged in age from 31 to 45, but taught in disciplines such as biology and critical thinking.

**Laggard syndrome.** Six faculty members among the 12 interviewed perceived themselves as far behind in using the latest technology in the classroom or did not feel comfortable using technology. Their responses were as follows:

- “From a professional and instructor standpoint, I think it’s like anything else. If you don’t adapt, you will get lost. Whether it’s a traditional level or not, social media is what it is now.”
- “To ignore social media would be a disservice and whether we like it or not, it’s here. It’s not going anywhere.”

- “I consider myself in the middle of the road when it comes to technology, but 10 years ago, the first time I taught an online class, they introduced D2L [Desire to Learn]. I was intimidated at the time because I had not used the learning platform before, and little by little, I got into it and realized that when utilized properly, it can be instrumental.”
- “It’s our job as a facilitator to tap into the ones that are beneficial and determine which platforms the students are using so that we can become more familiar with different ways of learning.”
- “I’m currently in the knowledge stage, but still trying to determine how ‘social media’ could benefit classroom lecture.”
- “I think that social media should not be incorporated into the classroom. I have no plans of being ‘social’ with my students.

These interviewees expressed apprehension about using social media and ranged in age from 31 to 45, with 6 to 19 years of teaching experience.

**Themes.** After analyzing the transcripts of the 12 interviews, four main themes emerged regarding effective social media use in the southern university: professional development and training, resources and suggestions for use, clarity of the definition of social media, and benefits of using social media in the classroom. Comments were counted to determine frequency between categories (see Table 5).



Table 5. *Themes and Frequencies*

Themes	<i>n</i>
Professional development and training	23
Resources and suggestions for use	9
Clarity of definition of social media	19
Benefits of using social media in the classroom	23

Numerous themes emerged from the initial coding efforts, but the main themes were condensed into the four listed. Each primary theme is summarized below.

***The importance of developing and implementing training for social media.***

With 23 mentions by interviewees, the professional development and training theme was the most popular theme discussed by a significant margin. Some of the mentions in this category reflected the question about how the respondents could be more effective in using social media, but many focused instead on the need for professional development to make sure they were complying with the social media policy. Others felt the students know why social media is being used and educators should become more involved with the latest technology.

***Resources.*** Respondents mentioned this theme nine times. Nine of the 14 interviewees indicated a lack of resources, including not being familiar with the current location of the Center of Learning site currently provided by the university. Many of the respondents felt that the lack of being computer savvy and navigating the internal website for available resources was a challenge they faced in effectively using social media.

***Clarity of definition of social media.*** This theme was mentioned 19 times during the course of study. Unlike the other themes that were fairly consistently reported among the respondents, this theme was more divided between those who believed they had a clear understanding of the social media environment and those who felt they had a good handle on the term. Others felt that their understanding of social media was precisely what they used to motivate the students.

***Benefits of social media usage.*** All interviewees used social media for personal, academic, research, or professional purposes. The most popular services were Facebook and LinkedIn. The majority of them used Facebook for personal communication and LinkedIn for professional connections. Some other services mentioned in the interviews included course management systems (e.g., Blackboard), blog services (e.g., Blogger.com), wiki services (e.g., PBS Works), and Weebly (e.g., a blogging application or website); YouTube was the most frequently used for teaching and networking with the students. Fourteen (66.7%) instructors used the learning platform in their daily classroom, eight (38%) educators used Facebook, five (23.8%) used Twitter, 14 (66.7%) used YouTube in their classroom, and 10 (47.65%) used other types of social media such as LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, and Edmodo (see Table 6). Although the respondents mostly suggested that social media could have a positive impact on the higher education environment, some preferred that social media be constrained to limited operational functions such as YouTube and LinkedIn for networking purposes.

Table 6. *Types of Social Media Used in the Classroom*

Social media	<i>n</i>	%
Facebook	8	38.1
Twitter	5	23.8
YouTube	14	66.7
Other, please specify_____	1	4.8
Other	10	47.6

### Word Analysis

Figure 4 is a visual representation of the frequency in which certain words were used in the interview transcripts from the NVivo software. A word cloud is a visualization of text in which more frequently used words are effectively highlighted by occupying more space in the representation. Wordle was used to produce word-cloud analyses of the spoken and written responses of participants. The product demonstrated a fast and visually rich way to enable researchers to have a basic understanding of the data at hand. Word clouds can be a useful tool for preliminary analysis and for validating previous findings (McNaught & Lam, 2010). Word clouds give more prominence to words that appear more frequently in the research text. The terms were extracted from the interviews and entered into NVivo, which generated a word cloud that identified the commonalities of frequently used words and phrases from the participants who fully and partially understood the term social media (see Figure 4).

### Word Cloud Results

Feeding data into the application resulted in various word clouds as outputs. The researcher asked participants the questions on the survey pertaining to barriers of

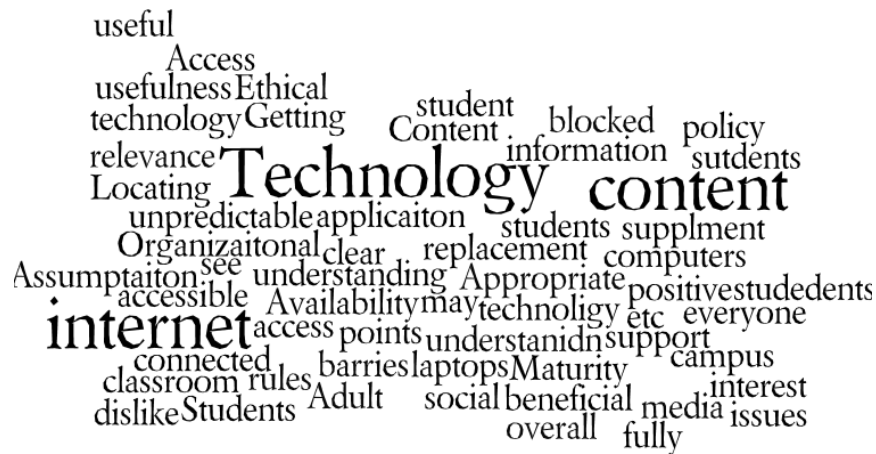
faculty members and administrative personnel to using social media in the classroom.

Figure 4 shows the interviewees discussed social media, but indicates that the interviewees did not use or mention the different types of social media tools used, such as Facebook and YouTube. Figures 5 through 7 are the word cloud results from the interview transcripts.



Figure 4. Defining social media.





*Figure 7.* Concerns with the usage of social media.

The word clouds indicate that the participants had some concerns with technology, content, and the Internet. These observations were confirmed by the reflections of the participants. During the interview, the participants often gave simple replies rather than elaborate answers. The word clouds effectively gave the researcher a fast and preliminary understanding of what was happening and directed the researcher's attention to different dynamics in the transcript. Factors include both the composition of the participants and the strategies used by participants. The word clouds not only validated the findings obtained from the survey, but they also quickly revealed some underlying reasons for faculty members' like or dislike of social media use. Participants who talked about the difficulties of technology also expressed concern about using it in their classrooms.

In this study, "Word clouds were be a useful research tool that allowed the researcher to visualize general patterns in the text. These visualization allowed the

researcher to grasp the common themes in the text and sometimes find out differences between various responses.

### **Summary**

An exploratory factor analysis was performed on the data obtained from the survey instrument. Five factors were extracted that accounted for 78.54% of the variability. Results from the interviews were grouped according to the types of responses provided. For example, questions dealing with Diffusion of Innovation (i.e., relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability) were analyzed together. The interviewees fit into various stages, including innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards, and excerpts from the interviews were included to support the findings. Four themes emerged from participants' responses: professional development, resources, clarity of definition of social media, and benefits of using social media. Word analysis supported the interview findings and provided a visual representation of how the interviewees responded to various questions.

## **Chapter 5: Implication and Results**

### **Interpretation of Results**

The guiding question related to this research study arose from a needs analysis to determine to what extent, if any, social media is being used at a southern postsecondary campus. A mixed methodology was adapted to examine educators and administrative personnel's perceptions of social media. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected with a survey and interviews. To understand and interpret the meanings of the survey results, interviews were conducted. The survey was distributed via e-mail and analyzed using an exploratory factor analysis.

The purpose of educational innovation is presumably to help schools accomplish their goals more effectively by replacing some inadequate programs or practices with better ones (Fullan, 1982). The Diffusion of Innovation framework (Rogers, 2003) was a model used to help interpret the interview data. Additional, theories and findings by other researchers were also used to interpret results within the guiding research question that was developed.

### **Exploratory Factor Analysis**

Results indicated that although some faculty members and administrators currently use social media for educational purposes, most are willing to consider such uses in the future. According to the Diffusion of Innovation theory (Rogers, 2003), the perceptions of social media attributes by those who expressed support for this idea (i.e., adopters) should yield insights into why they are open to innovation and why nonadopters are not. The exploratory factor analysis helped to understand the



underlying structure by identifying five factors that accounted for most of the variability in the respondents' ranking. It was determined that educators are using social media. Most are using it on a social level, but a few are using it on a professional level. The analysis showed that educators and administrators on the southern campus use social media to disseminate messages to their audience, which may include students, alumni, or the community. The results showed that social media is used as a form of communication in various departmental offices in the institution studied.

Training and professional development was the most important factor discovered. Participants expressed that if proper training was provided, then they would use social media professionally. Participants also felt that certain barriers played a vital part in the reason they did not use social media to connect with the students. Some of the barriers participants mentioned in their open-ended responses were "content relevance," "ethical issues," "technology," "time," "ethical policy issues," "getting students to see social media as a supplement, not a replace to traditional learning," "maturity," "availability of technology in the classroom," and "not having access on the campus." Seven (30%) faculty members mentioned that technology was one of the most important concerns in their not adopting the innovation, which included those faculty who were at the knowledge and persuasion stages in Rogers's framework. They said that technology was a priority to them, but they were fearful that they were not properly trained in the latest tools to use. Ironically, faculty who were at the confirmation stage were not concerned about this

issue. Some faculty had even experimented with learning new technology because they wanted to be connected with their students. These faculty members emphasized the trialability phase of Rogers's framework by showing that even without proper training, some faculty members were eager to include social media into their current classroom practices and were willing to share their experiences with other faculty members who were interested.

In answering the guiding research question, which asked to what extent and to what purpose is social media being used at the postsecondary campus, this factor showed that faculty and administrators were using social media at the southern campus. The data collected showed that the faculty members who possessed a wealth of knowledge regarding social media mentioned things such as attending conferences and consistently reviewing new research about social media proved to represent who received more engagement and interaction from their audiences on social media than others who did not. A few of the administrators and educators indicated that they possessed social media skills prior to teaching, which means that their knowledge base of social media was more diverse than other educators and administrators who have not received prior experience.

A second factor of current usage showed that educators were using social media both professionally and personally, which are related. Results indicated that faculty and administrative personnel differed in their current usage of social media for personal purposes. Most faculty members and administrators did use social media, although some did not (see Table 4); however, they did not differ in their current use

of social media for professional purposes. Although faculty members and administrators indicated that they were not currently using social media tools for professional and educational purposes, some faculty were willing to examine these uses in the future. When comparing the perceptions of faculty adopters and nonadopters on social media attributes, faculty adopter and nonadopter groups were not significantly different in their perceptions of compatibility, complexity, and observability, but were significantly different in their perceptions of relative advantage and trialability. Educators who are currently using social media mentioned tools such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Edmodo, Exit Ticket, Remind 101, Weebly, Google Docs, and Hyper Studio 5 in their current daily classroom.

Comments reflected that students have some experiences using social media to communicate with each other, but seldom used social media for educational topics. Some thought that since the use of social media was not required, they had achieved a degree of observability of how such systems might support their own work and current teaching practices.

According to Rogers (2003), innovations that can be experimented with on a trial basis are likely to be adopted sooner than innovations with which there is no trial use or experiment. Faculty's personal use of social media could serve as the trial basis they needed before deciding that this innovation could be useful if integrated into their teaching.

An overwhelming majority reported that they believe videos and wikis are valuable tools for teaching, and a majority said that social media sites can be valuable

tools for collaborative learning. This is an example of relative advantage to which the innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes. It was determined that all participants had been exposed to social media in some form of personal or professional usage and had gained a basic understanding of the innovation. Using social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and other related sites, they can learn how to apply technology skills in their education and daily life. Faculty and administrators are well aware of social media, and many use the sites both professionally and personally. It appears that many faculty members make use of social media in their teaching, while most participants have adopted integrated social media for learning. “Relative advantage”, alone is not enough to persuade people to adopt an innovation, but relative advantage is a key indicator of adoption.

As just described, all the components of Diffusion of Innovation (i.e. “relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability”) are present; however, the lack of information affected the researcher’s ability to place the various participants on an adoption curve as noted in the Diffusion of Innovation theory. This information would have better illustrated how the different groups at the campus adopted social media and placed them into the five adopter categories as defined by Rogers (2003): innovators, early adopters or acceptors, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

The third factor, reasons for usage, showed that some educators thought that social media had beneficial uses in with classroom; whereas, others were using social media either personally or professionally. Responses for why educators did not use

social media at all included “privacy concerns,” “ethical issues,” “technical limitations,” “limited usefulness,” and “others.” These factors have similar correlations to some of the barriers mentioned earlier. Both administrators and faculty feared loss of privacy and confidentiality, but faculty members may focus primarily on concern with control and monitoring interaction that were not in a university-secured resource such as a content management system like Blackboard. Though the concerns of privacy and confidentiality are shared with other research findings in higher education (Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013), they may be the result of a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to use various types of sites and ways to use the privacy settings to mitigate the issues. If properly trained and shown how to address the privacy concerns and ethical issues, as well as some of the technical limitations and limited usefulness reasons, faculty and administrators might use social media in their daily classroom practices. In relation to the guiding question, this result showed that educators expressed reasons for using social media in the classroom and identified that social media could be beneficial, which indicated that educators and administrators are using social media at the university.

The fourth factor described the current age and years of service of the participants, which ranged from 31 to over 60 years old. Fifty-two percent of the participants were between the ages of 46 and 59 years, and 43.5% of the participants had 6 to 9 years of work experience. Many of the participants had used social media sites both professionally and personally. There was a strong pattern of social media usage among teaching faculty between the ages of 46 and 59 years, but the usage

rates of older faculty lagged behind those of the participants between the ages of 46 and 59 years. All age groups indicated they used social media for professional purposes. In relation to the guided question, this factor showed that regardless of age and years of service, all participants used social media as a form of communication, whether on a personal or a professional level.

The fifth factor was barriers, which included various reasons the educators did not professionally use social media, such as privacy, ethical reasons, technology limitations, and limited usefulness. These barriers were all related and showed that the participants felt privacy and confidentiality represented a disadvantage. Barriers showed that faculty will use social media in education if campus leaders require faculty members to use social media as a supplemental educational tool. Technology barriers were big concerns among older faculty; however, younger faculty members were interested in learning new technologies and expressed a strong interest in adopting new technologies. To have a better understanding of the nature of their privacy concerns, all faculty who rated privacy as a concern or a barrier of teachers' use of social media were asked to provide more details. The results showed that a single issue was not the cause, but the barrier was they did not fully understand the technological issues associated with using social media and they had a high level of concern with multiple aspects of privacy. In relation to the guiding question, barriers were identified in the research that may limit growth in the use of social media. Based on the research, an emphasis was placed on the issues of separating professional usage and personal usage of social media. The data showed that faculty

members and administrators are using social media but not on a professional level, and they are apprehensive about using social media based on these barriers.

### **Interviews (Diffusion of Innovation)**

According to Rogers (2003), the five stages of acceptance in the Diffusion of Innovation theory are knowledge, persuasion, advantage, implementation, and confirmation. The Diffusion of Innovation theory includes the acceptance of an innovation through communication channels in society over a period of time (Rogers, 2003). The theory indicates that specific intrinsic characteristics are associated with the acceptance rate of innovation and include a relative advantage over using the technology.

This study followed the theory. For example, when the participants were given the survey to determine their understanding of social media, they were informed or given information about social media. The second step was persuasion, which occurred when the participants agreed to be interviewed and discussed their current knowledge and usage of social media. The interview provided an opportunity for participants to share how comfortable they were using social media and to expand on reasons that they felt social media could be beneficial in the classroom. The third step was decision, which occurred when the participants shared their personal opinions and expressed their apprehensions and opinions of the tool. The final step of confirmation was an ongoing communication and a kind of formative checkpoint at the end of each stage to determine if each task has been properly carried out. This occurred when the participants realized that with the proper professional development

and training, they would be shown how to use social media successfully in their daily classroom practices.

Comparing the participants at the confirmation and implementation stages with the participants at the persuasion provided an overview. Most of them were young, which meant that they had been exposed to technology culture. However, the latter included tenured faculty members who favored the lecture format and were comfortable using teaching methods without the latest technology. Other characteristics showed that the faculty members exposed to technology also knew about the innovation and were willing to keep a good relationship with other faculty and administrators. They eagerly spent their own time learning new ways to enhance their teaching practices. To them, the value of the innovation was compatible with their personal values and attitudes. The Diffusion of innovation theory not only helped frame the guiding question, but also underscored the importance of attributes of the innovations, the communication channels involved in diffusion, the decision processes of adopters over time, and the social systems in which adopters live and work (Rogers, 2003).

### **Validity and Reliability**

The study could be expanded to include a larger population to explore the variables surrounding the results more thoroughly by including instructors who currently teach on ground as well as virtually and show a comparison of how social media is used in both platforms. The sample size was 23 respondents, which should be increased to improve the validity by including more opinions that are diverse and



to have a larger pool of participants. Most faculty members who completed the initial survey were computer savvy, but a few participants had difficulty completing the survey, because they were not comfortable with technology. Several limitations of this study were discovered, one of which included the small participant pool of 23 faculty members from a small southern university. The participants were not representative of the population as a whole, because of the targeted size. The sample consisted of 23 full-time or adjunct instructors or administrative personnel.

According to the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's test of sphericity of the sample size was adequate, but a small sample size can cause interaction between variables, which can skew the results (Rourke & Hatcher, 2013). The sample size should be increased in future research to increase data reliability. As the survey was sent via the Internet, it was assumed that the respondents were comfortable using technology; however, some of the respondents did not agree to be interviewed after taking the survey. Another limitation was the researcher's bias and its impact on the interpretation of the data collected, especially the interpretation of interviewed individuals and defining the five factors created by the exploratory factor analysis, during the study.

The research outlined in this study fits with other current research in this field; however, more research is needed. A deeper analysis on teacher perceptions of social media, a larger sample size, and more qualitative research on how social media is used in classrooms would be beneficial for this field of research. The teaching and learning context has become increasingly complex in recent years, as faculty are

challenged to keep pace with emerging developments, adopt innovative practices, and assess student learning outcomes. The rapid pace of change and the growing expectations associated with teaching and learning indicate that college and university leaders need to provide additional support for faculty development (Daly, 2011).

### **Implication for Administrators**

The key themes that emerged from the data analysis were (a) professional development and training, (b) resources and suggestions for use, (c) clarity of the definition of social media, and (d) benefits of using social media in the classroom. Each theme is described in detail, along with a description of the implication of each theme. These themes showed that the educators knew about specific social media tools, their level of knowledge was low to moderate, and the majority of educators and administrative personnel had a sufficient level of knowledge about social media, which are parallel to results in Moran et al. (2013) and Seaman and Tinti-Kane (2013).

**Professional development.** Administrators could provide support to educators to coach them on how to use internal resources that are available, as they constantly use the internal website for student support. Education and training was another method mentioned by participants to prevent the apprehension of not using social media in the classroom. Participants made the following statements:

- “I think we have to be properly shown how to use any tool to be successful.”

- “Social media could possibly get more students involved in the learning process, as many students are technical savvy. Also, with the advancement in technology, it is essential to use such resources, as they are used in many businesses.”
- “Facebook and Twitter could possibly be disruptive to the learning process. Inappropriate conduct from professors and students alike. It also could discourage face-to-face communication, as texting has done, and result in poor verbal communication skills.”

To increase professional development and provide trialability, leaders at the university should incorporate ongoing training for using social media, as they often do with Microsoft Office products or other technological innovations implemented to enhance learning, teaching, and advising, as well as to streamline processes (e.g., Blackboard, Desire 2 Learn, eCollege, Banner).

During this training, faculty could learn how to create a Facebook account with a secret privacy setting or use the YouTube features of sharing videos and posting videos directly into the course shells. Additionally, faculty attendees could participate in group discussion and activities such as posting course-related questions to help practice how they could successfully use these tools in the classroom.

Administrative personnel can improve the use of social media by incorporating technology into the current usage and by becoming involved with faculty to use the tools. Analysis of the interview data revealed that administrators

lacked training on using social medial tools. It might be beneficial to include current and best practices for using social media in future professional development workshops.

Providing training programs and workshop is an important strategy that should be implemented. Even if the innovation is compatible with the current social media policy, the innovation may not be successfully adopted because of a lack of required knowledge, skills, and information for implementing the innovation. Well-planned training schedules should be proposed for adopting the current usage of social media at this stage. Additionally, one-on-one consultation and counseling are useful means to address the concerns of how to use social media properly.

**Resources.** A need exists for educational awareness, and properly showing the available resources would be beneficial. The university has various types of faculty aids and resources, including webinar recordings and academic-publication and multimedia learning modules. Most of the respondents were optimistic that better technology would be developed in the future to determine the value and usage of the intranet.

The educators can use social media when they are given a proper explanation of how to use the current resources. Stories are currently shown and news is published through the official social media property on the campus portal, but in the absence of additional resources, the professional workshop might be a means of using social media as an interactive community. Administrative personnel can provide

demonstrations and show faculty members ways to navigate the campus internal portal for useful resources that are available.

One concern that the administrative personnel addressed was developing a way to reduce the time required to locate usable resources. Several participants remarked on the lack of resources, not knowing how to use these resources, or the time required to locate resources that were available. This is a direct implication that if educators are properly trained on how to navigate through the internal portal, resources could be a useful tool. A call for institutional support for administrative personnel is needed. Interviewees expressed a need for faculty support in terms of adopting new technologies. They would like to have access to these technologies and learn more about new ways to use them, such as best practices.

**Clarity of definition of social media.** The term *social media* is everywhere, but on the campus of the university studied, there is no generally accepted definition. For example, a recent informal survey of experts yielded 30 different definitions of social media (Cohen, 2013). It is helpful to consider a definition to clarify what is meant by the term and how it is distinguished for the administrators at this campus. It is important that administrators have a clear understanding of the definition of social media so they are connected with the students as well as the educators.

As a few of the educators and administrators did not understand the term “social media”, it will be easy to explain the definition of social media by explaining the term and explaining how to use the tools during the training. Faculty members and administrative personnel at this campus must attend a faculty meeting each

semester to share best practices and concerns. During this meeting, collaborative communication begins by discussing student enrollment and other policy and procedures, including social media, to make sure all participants are complying with policy.

A professional development workshop could be included to demonstrate and determine the various types of social media definitions and show administrators how to use various forms of social media tools properly. For the individuals who are unable to attend, recorded webinars could be developed that could include step-by-step instructions on how to use various types of social media tools properly. These videos can then be posted on the internal university portal for future reference. The researcher has identified similarities between the current usage of social media and issues identified from the literature review, the survey, and the interviews.

**Benefits of social media usage.** All 23 participants (100%) were interviewed, who expressed that social media was beneficial for personal, academic, or professional purposes. This theme indicated that the participants interviewed had some knowledge of social media, but with proper training and professional development, participants could use social media in their daily classroom practices to help engage student interaction, which would be beneficial.

The aspect examined was the level of administrative awareness of the benefits of using social media. The administrative personnel expressed that they used social media in some facets of their daily administrative duties and understood that staying engaged with the students could be beneficial. This theme indicated that

administrative personnel are using social media as a tool to enhance communication among students. The use of social media also offers many powerful information-sharing and collaboration opportunities for learners and learning.

### **Implication for Instructors**

A meaningful implication for instructors because of this study lies within advocating the following themes, which is a priority based on the exploratory factor analysis: (a) professional development and training, (b) resources and suggestions for use, (c) clarity of definition of social media, and (d) benefits of using social media in the classroom. Based on the data collected, the use of social media in higher education is likely to continue to increase, which means that faculty must be prepared to learn how to use social media properly as a daily practice. Expanded exposure to social media can benefit student learning by creating more connections over time.

**Professional development.** Most respondents expressed a need for professional workshops that would contribute to using social media successfully. Educators who take the time to use various forms of social media may expand on student engagement and save time in the classroom. They should then be able to share their knowledge and resources, including some of their tried practices, to those educators who may be unfamiliar with or uncomfortable using social media. Sharing among resources may increase educators' persuasion, decision, and implementation that will allow them to use social media.

Although the use of social media among faculty has increased, the research indicated that there is still significant room for growth in using social media for

professional purposes by faculty. In addition to the expected increase in the use of social media by participants in this study, increased use of social media by higher education faculty is likely in the near future. This research revealed that the increase in use might not be entirely voluntary. Some faculty said they felt pressured to use social media, despite their apprehensions regarding the usefulness of the technology and concerns about potential issues. If faculty are shown how to implement some social media tools properly in their classroom and participate in the professional development workshops, they might feel more comfortable about using such tools in the future.

A survey question indicated that it was essential that adjunct instructors, educators, and administrative personnel are educated about social media technologies so they can make the most of the technologies to perform their duties and improve service to their students. The responses from this question indicated that 68.2% of respondents strongly agreed that if personnel are trained, they will be able to provide more quality service to their students.

**Resources.** Participants mentioned the word *resources* frequently. If instructors see a demonstration on how to use various internal sources provided by the university, they may feel more comfortable incorporating social media into their daily practices. Many of the respondents felt that the lack of resources was due to the difficulty they had navigating the internal portal. A portal on the university server identifies faculty resources; provides several job aids such as Blackboard, Collaborate, and Kaltura; and includes systematic instructions. A desire to use these



tools to improve the quality of their work was mentioned by a majority of the participants in the interviews. They expressed sympathy for their subordinates and new faculty members who were not shown how to use the resources that are available properly. Most of the respondents were optimistic that better technology would be developed in the future to determine the value of the social media environment. Engagement with social media needs to be seen as a priority for all institutions and for all individuals involved in education.

**Clarity of definition of social media.** As the rapid growth of social media is relatively new, the researcher examined if this newness translates into differences in awareness levels by age or by current stages in educators' careers. When examining the stages in the career (length of time teaching), faculty responses indicated a small difference in clarity of the definition of social media. Faculty who had been teaching less than 10 years were more likely to be aware of the various social media sites, as were faculty who had been teaching more than 20 years. The awareness level among faculty was common, but only a few older instructors showed uncertainty in the clarity of the definition of the term *social media*. Despite the clarification, participants were using the term *social media* interchangeably with specific platforms at times, which indicated that only a small percentage of educators were not aware of what social media means.

**Benefits of social media usage.** Faculty members are embracing the current usage of new and innovative technologies, including social media. They incorporate these tools into their instruction, which can build confidence. At the same time,

students are encouraged participants in their learning, which creates a more engaged environment. Choosing to use social media with the intention of enhancing engagement and interaction should be beneficial in the classroom. Faculty can benefit from sharing experiences with colleagues and developing best practices that have worked over the years. Although some people might know of social media sites, they might not actually make use of these sites (Morgan, Seidman & Tinti-Kane, 2011). The increased use of social media has in turn led to pressure on faculty to use social media inside and outside the classroom, based on the real and potential benefits to institutions that can be obtained from using social media (Kear, 2010). This theme indicated that faculty members are using social media as a form of communication among students and enhancing the learning atmosphere.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Based on the data collected, it appears that social media is currently being used in higher education and will likely increase in popularity in the future. Future research will be necessary to determine to what extent and for what purpose educators and administrative personnel in higher education use social media. This study involved examining social media use at one university, and barriers to using social media were discovered. The main barrier that consistently ranked high was professional development and training. A question remains regarding how effective educators will become after they are properly trained how to implement social media into their classroom. It was also discovered how the usage of social media can

enhance student engagement, as well as provide more interaction among educators and students. Specific technological resources still need to be identified.

Training and connection two factors that were low because of proper usage of technology, ethical issues and content analysis, while barriers and professional usage were high because the educators were using social media on a professional level. The current usage was another factor extracted from the survey findings that indicated educators are using social media both personally and professionally. Although educators mainly use social media on a professional level, this could be due to school policy that some type of social media tools should be incorporated into the classroom. The reasons for using social media showed that the educators did not feel that it was beneficial because they were not sure how to use the tool and were not familiar enough with social media to address the question. Further research should be conducted to see the relationship between personal and professional usage.

## **Conclusion**

As the popularity of using social media has increased among students at colleges and universities, it is important to understand that there is perceived value to using social media for educational purposes. A significant part of understanding the rate of adoption for technological innovations is evaluating professed advantages and disadvantages of the innovation (Caldwell, 2015). The overall conclusion drawn from this study is that (65.2%) of all the faculty and administrators at the southern campus professionally use social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube for educational purposes. The same respondents appeared to understand the

potential benefits of using social media, whereas other faculty were more willing to consider using these media for future educational purposes if properly trained. These results were consistent with previous studies (Moran et al., 2011; Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013).

The results of this research, along with current professional practices, provided insight into why some of the educators at this university were using social media in their classes and others were not. With a better understanding of the perceived barriers, the researcher can provide more support and guidance for faculty and administrators. Training and professional development provide multiple opportunities to learn how to use this technology for teaching and learning, but no single model will meet the diverse needs of the faculty. This research may help this postsecondary campus develop a more active program of professional development workshops and provide peers with demonstrations of ongoing work about how to use social media properly to enhance student engagement and provide a more up-to-date type of learning atmosphere.

Educators who work in the field of higher education should understand the effect that most educational institutions and educators have on individuals. Education is a tool that can influence others and that helps to determine individuals' path in life. Educators can have a significant impact on students' lives. Additionally, incorporating technology into higher education will play a critical role in transforming the lives of other students. Findings indicated that faculty and administrators are using social media to communicate with their students; however,

the outcome of this study could help personnel make informed decisions concerning the use of social media.

Involving social media in education has provided a new dimension to the educational industry. The presence of social media in education has changed teaching. Using social media enables students to communicate after hours. Students are able to maintain a direct link to teachers outside of the classroom. This means that students will be able to ask for assistance on homework assignments or projects from the comfort of their homes. Social media also enhances peer collaboration in higher education institutions by providing discussion topics for a class and working through problems together. The importance of social media has increased not just for the students, but also for the teachers. Social media is a new direction for technology and is another way for educators to help students make effective use of social media to build their knowledge. Hopefully this research will continue to help other educators ensure the relationship between education and social media is productive and positive and that social media can serve as another tool in educators' overall mission. This expressed willingness is an indication to colleges and universities that promoting the use of social media in the classroom may be a viable option if faculty receive training to learn how to use social media effectively and efficiently.

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## **Appendix A: Social Media Survey**

### **Describe Yourself**

1. Which best described you: (Check one)
  - a. Adjunct Instructor (1)
  - b. Full time Faculty (2)
  - c. Administrator (3)
2. Years of service in the field is: (Check one)
  - a. 1-5 years (2)
  - b. 6-19 years (3)
  - c. 20+ years (4)
3. Your current age is: (Check one)
  - a. Less than 30 (1)
  - b. 31-45 (2)
  - c. 46-59 (3)
  - d. 60 and above (4)

### **Use of Social Media**

4. I personally use social media sites (Check one)
  - a. Never
  - b. Infrequently
  - c. Frequently
5. I professionally use social media site (Check one)
  - a. Never
  - b. Infrequently
  - c. Frequently
6. My primary reason for not personally using social media sites is: (Check all that apply)
  - a. Privacy concerns (1)
  - b. Ethical concerns (2)
  - c. Technical limitations (3)
  - d. Limited usefulness (4)
  - e. Other; please specify: (5) \_\_\_\_\_
7. My primary reason for not professionally using social media sites is: (Check all that apply)
  - a. Private concerns (1)
  - b. Ethical concerns (2)
  - c. Technical limitations (3)
  - d. Limited usefulness (4)

- e. Other; please specify (5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. I personally utilize the following social media sites: (Check all that apply)
  - a. Facebook (1)
  - b. Twitter (2)
  - c. YouTube (3)
  - d. Other, please specify: (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. I professionally utilize the following social media sites: (Check all that apply)
  - a. Facebook (1)
  - b. Twitter (2)
  - c. YouTube (3)
  - d. Other, please specify: (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. I understand how social media can be beneficial in my classroom, both physically on campus and online (Check one)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not really sure how to utilize this tool
  - d. Not familiar enough to address this question
- 11. It is essential that adjunct instructors/educators/administrative personnel are educated about social media technologies so they can make the most use of the technologies to perform their duties and improve service to their students.
  - a. Strongly agree (1)
  - b. Agree (2)
  - c. Neutral (3)
  - d. Disagree (4)
  - e. Strongly disagree (5)
- 12. Social media can be used to stay connected to students.
  - a. Strongly agree (1)
  - b. Agree (2)
  - c. Neutral(3)
  - d. Disagree (4)
  - e. Strongly disagree (5)
- 13. What concerns, if any, do you have about the use of social media within your organization?
- 14. What do you think the biggest barriers implementing social media in your classroom are?

**Appendix B: Educator's Interview Protocol**

Permission was approved to use and modify interview questions

1. Do you fully understand what “social media” means?
2. Do you use social media tools in your class, if so, what kind of social media is used?
3. If yes, go to question # 5
4. If no, go to question # 8
5. What social media tools have you used in your classes?
6. What activities did you use with the social media tools?
7. What assessment strategies have you used to evaluate these activities?
8. What benefits do you perceive of using social media tools in your classes?
9. What concerns do you perceive of using social media tools in your classes?
10. Do you see any positive impacts of using social media on students' learning outcomes? Why?
11. Do you see any negative impacts of using social media on student's learning outcomes? Why?
12. What technologies do you see that instructors can use in teaching and learning in the future?
13. Do you have any suggestions regarding the issue of using social media for teaching?
14. Do you see a future use of social media in higher education?
15. Do you see how social media will impact the future in higher education?

**Appendix C: Factor Analysis Table**

Factors and items	Mean	Category	N
Professional development			
Training (n=22)	1.45	1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree	n=15 n=5 n=1 n=1 n=0
Professional use (n=23)	2.52	1=Never 2=Infrequently 3=Frequently	n=3 n=5 n=15
Barriers (ethical & technology) (n=17)	2.94	1=Content Relevance 2=Ethical issues 3=Technology 4=Other	n=3 n=1 n=7 n=6
Connection (n=22)	1.59	1=Strongly agree 2=Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree	n=14 n=5 n=1 n=2 n=0
Current use			
Professionally use social media sites (n=23)	2.52	1=Never 2=Infrequently 3=Frequently	n=3 n=5 n=15
Personally use social media sites (n=24)	2.34	1=Never 2=Infrequently 3=Frequently	n=4 n=7 n=12
Reasons for use			
Beneficial (n=22)	1.18	1=Yes 2=No 3=Not real sure how to utilize this tool 4=Not familiar enough to address this question	n=20 n=0 n=2 n=0
Social media use (n=24)	2.34	1=Never 2=Infrequently 3=Frequently	n=4 n=7 n=12
Not personally using social media (n=14)	2	1=Privacy	n=9

		2=Ethical issues	n=3
		3=Technical Limitations	n=0
		4=Limited usefulness	n=0
		5=Other	n=2
About yourself			
Age (n=22)	2.69	1=Less than 30	n=0
		2=31--45	n=9
		3=46-59	n=11
		4=60 and above	n=2
Service (n=23)	1.78	1=1-5 years	n=9
		2=6-19 years	n=10
		3=20+ years	n=4
Barriers			
Not professionally using social media (n=16)	2.75	1=Privacy	n=4
		2=Ethical	n=6
		3=Technical limitations	n=1
		4=Limited Usefulness	n=4
		5=Other	n=1
Concerns (n=17)	2.94	1=Privacy	n=3
		2=Ethical	n=1
		3=Technical limitations	n=7
		4=Limited Usefulness	n=6
		5=Other	n=0

**Appendix D: A Needs Analysis White Paper**

A NEEDS ANALYSIS WHITE PAPER

A Faculty Professional Development Workshop Proposal for a Southern  
Postsecondary Campus

A White Paper will be presented to the Provost of the Southern  
Postsecondary Campus

The Objective, Methods, Findings, and Conclusion of the Capstone Project were  
completed in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Doctor of Education  
Degree at Morehead State University

### **Introduction**

This white paper has been developed to communicate a proposal for change in the current instructional practices at a southern postsecondary campus. The campus has provided social media platforms that may be used in the classroom and an accompanying policy regarding usage should the instructor choose to use social media. The policy was established to help employees appreciate social media and represent the university professionally. However, the college as a whole should identify strategies to help ensure that educators and administrators reach their potential by supporting learning through social media. Based on conversations between the researcher and employees, it was clear that there were differences in understanding regarding what social media actually involved.

Realizing the potential implications of this topic, the researcher conducted a needs analysis research study that provided a richer understanding of how social media is currently implemented in instruction, as well as how social media may be more effectively applied as an educational tool. The results of these findings were analyzed and used to develop a proposal for professional development training for educators and administrators. Included within this proposal is a summary of the data collected, the analysis from the study, recommendations, and proposed solutions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of social media among faculty and administrators at the southern postsecondary campus. Currently, the campus does not require the use of social media in the classroom, even though tools

are provided. A needs analysis was conducted to identify the extent to which, and for what purposes, educators and administrators were using social media. The findings of this study could benefit the students, as well as the campus, to determine if social media is a possible solution for marketing within higher education. Various streams of literature were considered for this study, including the definition of social media, determining who uses social media, trends of social media, and the uses of social media in universities and colleges. Existing research regarding the usefulness of social media for education was also considered. The most appropriate framework for this study was Roger's Diffusion of Innovation theory; which determines the adoption of technology in higher education.

The study referenced in this white paper seeks to advance academic excellence and increase the effective use of social media in teaching and learning. Conducting a needs analysis was necessary in order to understand how and for what purpose social media is used by educators and administrator. It is through this understanding that the researcher was able to identify areas that employees of this campus may improve by developing practices to effectively implement social media. If properly used in the current classroom setting, educators have the opportunity to enhance the learning experience and increase student engagement. As an educator of this campus, we need to identify the part we play in this initiative and others that will not only increase engagement, but serves to enhance retention as well.

The quantitative data collection included surveys distributed to a sample of 23 participants, including faculty and administrators. The survey collected preliminary



data regarding the types of social media sites, features of sites used, the interaction activities and assessment strategies used, concerns for faculty, and demographic questions. An exploratory factor analysis was used to extract significant factors from the survey. These factors were: 1) professional development; 2) current usage; 3) reasons for usage; 4) about yourself; and 5) barriers.

Twelve participants were chosen from the original 23 surveys and were interviewed between March and April 2015. The interviews were structured to ensure all participants were asked questions regarding their interaction and assessment strategies as well as motivations and concerns relevant to their understanding and use of social media. The qualitative data (interviews) were analyzed using the NVivo software. Four themes emerged based on the interview transcripts. These themes were: 1) professional development and training; 2) resources and suggestions for use; 3) clarity of definition of social media; and 4) benefits of using social media in the classroom.

The quantitative factors and qualitative themes both indicate that some educators believe they know about specific social media tools, but their actual level of knowledge is low to moderate; however, the majority of educators and administrators did have sufficient knowledge about social media. The results of this research also indicate that all interviewees use social media, to some degree, either for personal, academic or professional purposes. In addition, most of the participants had some understanding of the benefits of using social media and if provided adequate training would be more likely to use social media in the classroom.

Faculty and administrators are challenged to stay current with emerging technology and social network platforms. In addition, students of today are more technologically advanced and are not satisfied with the traditional brick and mortar classroom instructional delivery, but are looking for innovative practices that could result in advanced learning outcomes. This study was designed to investigate and address some of these issues. The results of the analysis served to create awareness of the issues that emerged from the data collection and allowed this researcher to develop solutions for effectively training educators in delivery methods for social media in the classroom. In the following sections, solutions will be presented of the outcomes from the research findings and will propose an actual product, which will include a professional development workshop.

### **Solutions**

The first factor that was extracted from the Exploratory Factor Analysis and the first theme that emerged from the interview results involved training and professional development. Because training and professional development was determined to be the most important factor for educators and administrators, it is suggested that a faculty development workshop involving social media as an instructional delivery method should be developed and delivered to all employees at this campus.

The researcher proposes objectives from the professional development workshop that will:

1. Help participants develop a clearer understanding of the term “social media”, and what it involves, including the potential benefits to the student, campus, etc.,
2. Provide clear and relevant examples on how to integrate social media into the classroom,
3. Provide specific instruction to administrators regarding how to support and coach future educators on using available internal resources;
4. Remove barriers and challenge the boundaries imposed by traditional educational learning, and
5. Create a social learning atmosphere that will enhance and develop the classroom learning communities.

These objectives support the findings from this study. In the survey, respondents indicated that they support using social media to disseminate information to students and faculty. When asked to identify ways to use social media, they indicated it should be used for public education, explanation of services available, and a way to promote events. Respondents also indicated they would like to see demonstrations on how social media could be properly used in the classroom. The following is a discussion of how each of the objectives will map back to the findings of the study:

**Objective 1:** Help participants develop a clearer understanding of the term “social media” and what it involves, including the potential benefits to the student, campus, etc.

**Support from Findings 1:** Based on the interview responses, participants only mentioned the terms ‘YouTube’ and ‘Facebook’ when discussing their perceptions of social media. This theme was mentioned 19 times during the course of the study. Unlike the other terms that are fairly consistently reported among the respondents, this theme was more divided between those who believed they had a clear understanding of the social media environment, and those who felt they had a good handle on the term. Others felt that their understanding of social media was precisely what they used to motivate the student. Thus, the data analysis indicated limited knowledge of the interviewee’s understanding of the term “social media.” In order to fully understand all of the benefits that social media has to offer, faculty needs to understand what tools are made available to them and how they may be used to enhance learning.

**Objective 2:** Provide clear and relevant examples on how to integrate social media into the classroom.

**Support from Findings 2:** Based on the interview responses, participants expressed feeling pressured to use social media, despite the apprehension they had regarding the usefulness of technology and concerns about potential issues. In addition, participants indicated if shown how to implement social media tools in their classroom, they would feel more comfortable about using the tools in the future. Again, in order to fully understand all of the benefits that social media has to offer, faculty needs to understand what tools are made available to them and how they may

be used to enhance learning. This is best achieved through relevant examples and demonstrations.

**Objective 3:** Provide specific instruction to administrators regarding how to support and coach future educators on using available internal resources.

**Support from Findings 3:** Administrators could support the educators and provide the necessary coaching because they are in constant use of the internal website for student support. Education and training are another method mentioned by participants to prevent the apprehension of not using social media in the classroom. Many of the respondents felt that the lack of resources was due to the difficulty they had in navigating the internal portal. They expressed sympathy with their subordinates and new faculty members who were not shown how to properly use the resources that are available.

**Objective 4:** Remove barriers and challenge the boundaries imposed by traditional educational learning

**Support from Findings 4:** Based on the interview responses, educators who did not use social media at all included privacy concerns, ethical issues, technical limitations, limited usefulness and other concerns as their reason for not using it in a professional level. These factors have similar correlations to some of the barriers mentioned earlier. Both administrators and faculty had concerns of loss of privacy and confidentiality, but perceptions of faculty members focused primarily on concerns with a secured learning content management system such as Blackboard. These barriers are all related showing that as faculty revealed that privacy and confidentiality

represent a disadvantage or barrier to using social media in education if this campus requires faculty members to use social medias as supplemental educational tool.

**Objective 5:** Create a social learning atmosphere that will enhance and develop the classroom learning communities

**Support from Findings 5:** Training and professional development provides multiple opportunities for educators and administrators to learn how to use social media for teaching and learning; however, no single model will meet the diverse needs of the faculty. This research will help develop a more active program of professional development workshops and provide peers with demonstrations of ongoing work and how to properly use social media to enhance student engagement and provide a more up-to-date type of learning atmosphere.

### **Product**

This white paper has addressed simple strategies to assist educators and administrators in ways to use social media. An additional product for this study will be the recommended professional faculty development workshops that will provide hands on demonstrations on how to properly implement social media into the daily classroom. Examples will be provided for those who want to explore and expand their professional learning network via social tools. This workshop would include:

- Implementing a presence on social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in the course shell through Blackboard,
- Preparing a glossary list with icons and terms most commonly used throughout social media platforms,

- Prepare educators with practices to become proficient with using social media,
- Demonstrate how users should join groups as per their career/discipline area,
- Educate participants on the power social media may have and show them responsible practices that could be used in the classroom,
- Limit focus to standardize the flow of useful information, while ensuring adherence to the campus policy,
- Develop short online tutorials on tasks that can be accomplished using social media, and
- Provide job aids that will allow users to quickly access and print the information included in the tutorial.

### **Conclusion**

The data gathered through surveys and interviews provided valuable information concerning the overall perception of using social media within the southern postsecondary campus. The results showed that the campus included in this study does use social media as an additional form of communication in their various departmental offices; however, it is not a required practice for instructional delivery. The most important factor that was discovered from the findings showed that training and professional development was needed. The experience of the participants suggested a need for strategies to integrate these technologies into the classroom, as well as encouragement of social media as a best practice for educators and administrators. If properly trained and supported, such expanded exposures could be

beneficial to the faculty and administrators as well as the students. The following practices drawn from this study include:

- If proper training was provided, participants would use social media professionally
- Administrators could provide the support to the educators to coach them on how to use internal resources that are available.
- Educational awareness and demonstrations on how to use the available resources including job aid resources, webinar recordings, and multimedia learning modules would be beneficial for both educators and administrators at this campus.
- Use social media as an optional tool both inside and outside classes.
- Educate faculty and administrators about the institutional policies on the use of social media as well as faculty support.
- Understanding that the use of social media is a developing area for study.

As previously discussed, more scholarly research needs to be conducted, and more importantly, individual experimentation is needed to understand what works, how, and in what circumstances social media may be most beneficial. Social media is more than a tool; it is a mechanism with the potential to improve the learning environment, for both learners and educators. It is a new direction that technology has taken and is another way for educators to make effective use of social media to build their knowledge. Social media, as an innovative technology, coupled with traditional education, can be used to enhance the learning experience. This research



will help other educators and administrators ensure that the relationship of using social media is a productive and positive one that can aid as another tool to enhance education. Using this study could be an opportunity to test different tools and technologies and their efficacy in teaching and learning. This is an exciting time to be an educator; with new, innovative alternatives that offer impelling opportunities for the future.

## VITA

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